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622 623 352 The bosseia meet under a separate shed, specially built for this purpose. The captain has a "throne," which is an ornately carved stool. The one belonging to the captain of the village of Lombe was purchased and brought back to the American Museum of Natural History. The members of the bosseia, too, have ceremonial seats, with elaborately pierced carving, typically West African in design. When the occasion arises, a meeting is held and the council is seated about on these ceremonial benches to hold palaver.

622 623 692 [537] The business is brought up. Perhaps it is a domestic quarrel—two men over one woman. The offended party rises and begins exercising the Bush Negro's traditional privilege of unlimited and vociferous oratory. He details his wrongs. Grand gestures accompany the sonorous flow of words. The interested members of the village sit at a respectful distance from the captain and bosseia, and listen to the harangue. When other speakers have had their say, any inhabitant of the village may get up and give his or her opinion. Proudly the captain exercises his judicial talent, and the decision is handed down. It is not questioned.

622 623 562 [364] The women members of the bosseia have as much power as the men. It is chiefly the women who see that the ancestral and village customs are enforced. They are the guardians of the ancient traditions and customs of the race. To them, also, belongs the duty of keeping the village clean. If the town needs a general cleaning, the women bosseia go about from hut to hut, telling the women to get together and perform the task.

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When there is a conflict between villages over their hunting and fishing territories, the captains and bosseias of each town meet on some neutral ground and arbitrate the matter. Then, indeed, the parley becomes wordy and rhetorical. Each cause is championed with long speeches, setting forth oratorically the rights and conditions involved. But once an agreement is arrived at, the matter is closed.

Local disputes, excluding those over women, are not nearly so common or so serious as they are among civilized white men. There is a minimum of quarrelling among the Djukas; they get along together in an almost idyllic way. Wherever there are women, there will, of course, be quarrelling, for, in the words of Confucius, "Disorder does not come from heaven, but is brought about by women." Outside of this factor there is little friction in the Bush Negro community. Their highly communalized government works exceedingly well.

The Granman and his captains have an annual council to make laws for the coming year. This and other assemblies are known as *krutu*. The captains and bosseias from surrounding villages concentrate at some important town to meet the Granman there. The Council near Gansee, the trading-post, included the villages of Nu, Lombe, Biodoti, Ganya Condree, and Adawai. Jankoeso refused to hold his parley in the town proper, although Gansee is the largest village in the entire tribe, because there is a Christian mission station there, conducted by the Moravian Brothers. Jankoeso is in favour of retaining the ancestral gods of the jungle, and does not look with favour upon the white proselytizers.

/64 cont./

613 561 Nevertheless the lineage is not strictly speaking divided into age grades; and when the men assemble in council for an affair which concerns the whole group, all may take the floor without consideration either of age or of place in the genealogy.

613 571 561 The council (kuutu). This is the principal social institution within the lo. The kuutu is the assembly of the men of the lo without consideration of age. No precise rule defines the age at which an adolescent may begin to attend it, and in principle all may take the floor. But decorum requires that unless they are personally interested in the question or have something important to say, the young let the elders do the talking. /65/

613 571 It is the captain (hedemã) and in his absence the eldest of the lineage who presides. He faces the assemblage, surrounded by some of the oldest men.

[537] Opposite him he has a respondent (piki mã) who greets all his sentences with ritual approbations hiya, hiya ba!, na so!, etc., without which a Refugee Black could not suitably make his speech.

[562] Each one then speaks if he feels the need to express his opinion. Women do not take part in the council unless it is a question of a daughter's marriage; but it happens that men leave the meeting to go get the advice of their mothers and take their places again. If it concerns a simple affair without suprahuman complications, such as the fixing of the price of a piece of work, the discussion is often quickly over; but in the opposite case the discussion continues interminably, for there is no exact rule for concluding it. Only a negative rule exists: the determined opposition of one-fourth to one-fifth of the council members prevents the carrying out of a project.

/147 cont./

848 If the girl is pregnant, the man may not abandon her: that would make a great to-do between the two kin groups: he must stay with her at least until the birth of the child.

883 836 178 [582] Nowadays among the Boni things tend to happen completely otherwise than custom makes provision for. The general opinion is that girls can no longer be held down, that they escape more and more from the authority of their mothers; many of them begin to run wild at about 14 or 15, and people are obliged to marry them off precipitately at 15 or 16. It is difficult to say what the proportion of these hasty marriages is, but the recriminations heard on all sides on the subject of the shamelessness of girls give the idea that it is increasing. In the [582] [848] villages on the French bank, out of nine girls married in 1958 there were only four marriages concluded according to regulations; the five others had been arranged hastily either because the girl was pregnant (two cases) or because she had laid herself open to scandal. /148/

582 Nearly all girls married between 1952 and 1956 were 15 to 17 years old.

584 This is about how things happen:

A man who is attracted by a girl tries to exchange a few [537] words with her unknown to her mother. There are special forms for these declarations. One speaks in a low voice, very fast, using special formulas. This is how one of our boatmen, one evening in October, 1952, addressed young Lomé, age 15, of Boniville village, who had gotten away from her mother on the pretext of going to get water for us.

584 539 "Woman, I love thee, I wish to live with thee, I wish to marry thee. That which God put in me I cannot take away (1).

1. Which means: I cannot change, you must take me as I am.